



The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
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INTERIM PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Last Wednesday, Ash Wednesday, Christians all over the world entered the holy season of Lent. Lent, unlike Advent, which has similar themes of preparation, has a particular history and a variety in practices between different Christian traditions. So, I thought I'd review some answers to common questions that often come up about Lent.

What is Lent?

Lent is the 40-day (excluding Sundays) season of the church year, preceding Easter. The season of Lent was developed in the early Christian church (starting about the 4th century), primarily as a period of preparation for people seeking to be baptized into the Christian faith. Consequently, Lent was characterized by practices of repentance, fasting, self-examination, prayer, Bible study, and service, etc. People would then be baptized on Holy Saturday and take Communion for the first time as part of the Easter celebrations. By the end of the first millennium, when most people were born into the Christian faith, Lent began shifting to be a period of general repentance and spiritual reflection and renewal for the entire church.

What do Presbyterians think about Lent?

Presbyterians are part of the Reformed tradition, the stream of theology and church life that originated in the Protestant Reformation in 16th century Geneva, led by John Calvin. Calvin and his followers were suspicious of many of the new practices that had emerged in the medieval Catholic Church, and Lent was no exception. They felt that many of the observances of Lent had less to do with deepening one's own faith and more to do with a sort of spiritual competition to demonstrate one's holiness. So, they argued that if one chose to observe Lent, one should do so in a way that was both voluntary and focused on deepening one's own understanding of the Christian faith.

What should I give up for Lent?

Presbyterians have not historically encouraged "giving something up for Lent," mainly because of the concerns described in the previous question. However, we haven't specifically opposed it, either. Rather, we have emphasized "taking something up for Lent": engaging in deeper spiritual disciplines and practices such as additional Bible study, worship, and prayer; acts of service; additional giving; and so on. Practices such as these go directly to enriching one's own faith and continue to be the heart of Lenten practice for Presbyterians.

So, how will you journey through Lent? What will you "take up" to deepen your faith, to engage more with the Christian community, to share Christ's grace-filled love with others? Will you commit to being in worship weekly, to daily prayer and scripture reading? Will you increase your generosity and service in grateful response to what you've been blessed with by God?

Hope to see you Sunday as we continue our Lenten journey!

May it be so,
Pastor David

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following women and men into our community of faith. They have met with and have been received by the Session, and will be welcomed during worship on a future Sunday morning. Please extend a warm welcome to:



- Eric and Amanda Johansen, who come with their sons Luke and Matthew and are residents of Burlington, NJ
- Andy and Debi Pratt, residents of Lawrence Township
- Sydney Ryon, resident of Lawrence Township, sister of Shelley Zuckerman

MISSION STUDY SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

On Sunday, March 3 and Sunday, March 10, following worship, the Mission Study team invites you to discover more about who we are as a congregation and who Jesus is calling us to be!

March 3 - learn and discuss the results from the congregational survey completed this past fall.

March 10 - work together to build a path forward as Slackwood church develops vision and mission statements and learns how God is calling Slackwood church to serve.



Each session will last about one hour.

Can't make the meetings in person? No worries! There will be a Zoom meeting on **Monday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m.**

Sign-up sheets are in fellowship hall or you can register by sending an email to Slackwoodpreschurch@gmail.com

WE ARE ENCOURAGING ALL MEMBERS AND THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY WORSHIPPING WITH US TO ATTEND ONE OR BOTH OF THESE DISCUSSIONS! ALL voices are important, please participate.

MARCH PROPERTY MEETING

The March Property Meeting scheduled for following worship on March 10, had to be moved to not conflict with the Mission Study programs. The new time for the meeting will be via Zoom on Monday March 11 at 7:00 pm.

SPRING CLEAN-UP

This year Easter Sunday is March 31st. The Property Committee will conduct this spring's cleanup on Saturday March 23, 2024, with a rain date the following Saturday, March 30th. With numerous things to do around the church and property, we are hoping for "real" spring weather to get many jobs done. We will gather at 8:30 am and conclude by 12:00. Any time you may have to help pitch in would be gratefully appreciated! All that is needed is your willingness to join in the "fun!" Hope to see you there, and bring your enthusiasm and smile!



SESSION NEWS

At its February 21 meeting the session made the following appointments for 2024:

Clerk of Session – Carol Belles
Christian Education Chair – Mark Thomas
Membership & Outreach Chairs – Beth Clark and Shirley Hafford
Property & Finance Chairs – Ginger Baker and Bill Mansmann
Worship Committee Chairs – Kate Moore and Carol Belles
Officer Nominating Committee Chair – Andrea Moore
Personnel Committee Chair – Shirley Hafford
Commissioner to Presbytery – Andrea Moore
Liaison to the Grace congregation – Penny Baumann
Newsletter editor – Penny Baumann
Church Treasurer – Ginger Baker
Trust Funds Treasurer – Bill Mansmann
Memorial Fund Secretary – Tara Perigny
Financial/Recording Secretary – Susan Gibbs
President, Board of Trustees – Carl Belles
Vice President, Board of Trustees – Karen Nolan

DEACONS CORNER



We are thankful for Fred Mitchell and Marilyn Stebbins who are going off the deacons. Fred, we know you will still be visiting our church members even though you aren't still an "official" deacon. You have been a faithful servant and have cared for so many. Marilyn, you have served the church, and especially the deacons (sunshine person), for several years. We have been blessed with your talents and will now be visiting you at Bear Creek! Thank you both for sharing your faith with others.

And welcome to our newly elected deacons: Tom Clark, Jim Branson, and Tina Morell (Bailie Gregory, we are thankful you are staying with us). We thank you for responding to the call as a church officer and look forward to working with you this upcoming year.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE



The season of Lent is upon us. This is a time of prayer and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord. Ash Wednesday was observed on February 14 in the sanctuary with more than 20 people participating. There were five areas of reflection culminating in the imposition of ashes and a blessing given by the Reverend David Bowman. Thank you to all those who helped make this meaningful evening possible.

There are many opportunities for you to join Slackwood and our community this Easter season. Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 24. This is a time in the church year when we remember how Christ gave his life in love for the world. Palms initially raised in celebration and praise, ultimately gave way to demands for crucifixion.





Presbyterian churches of Lawrence Township will join together on Maundy Thursday. The service will be held on March 28, 2024 at the Lawrence Road Presbyterian Church (1039 Lawrenceville Road). There will be a simple soup and bread dinner (free of charge) at 5:30pm. The local Presbyterian choirs will join together for the service, which will begin at 7:30 pm and include Communion.

Several volunteers are needed to make a pot of soup and to provide bread. Contact Pastor David if you are willing to bring soup or bread.

Opportunities for Good Friday services in the area will be posted in the weekly announcements over the next few weeks. There will not be a service at Slackwood.

On Easter Sunday, there will be an early service in the garden starting at 8:30am, weather permitting. The 10:30am service will be held in the sanctuary. Please consider joining us for one or both of these services.



Please continue to support Slackwood by ushering, being a liturgist, participating in the choir, or attending our monthly planning meetings. Please see a member of the worship committee if you have questions or are interested.

If you wish to be a part of the worship committee, our next meeting will be held after the worship service on February 25th. All are welcome to attend.

MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH



The Membership and Outreach Committee is hosting a Talent No Talent night with a potluck dinner to celebrate St. Patrick's Day on March 16th from 5 pm to 7 pm. Come out and join us in fellowship hall for laughter and share a meal.

There is a sign-up sheet in fellowship hall to add your name if you are interested in the talent portion of the social. Hope to see you there!



Membership and Outreach is also hosting our 2nd annual easter egg hunt for local area residents behind the church on March 23rd at 4:00, with a rain date of March 30th. Spread the word.

It's that time of year again! The 2024 Community Summer Fair will be held on August 17th. Planning is in the works and we would LOVE your help! It takes many people to pull this amazing outreach opportunity off. There will be a sign-up sheet on the Fellowship Hall table to join the committee or you can email Ginger Baker at gingerwells55@hotmail.com. Zoom committee meeting to follow in a week or two.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

"But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-falling stream!" -Amos 5:24

The Truth and Reconciliation Group continues to meet the second Thursday of the month at 7pm Via Zoom. The group is currently considering what book to choose for the next book discussion. However, the group is working towards having a movie showing of "Rustin" on Saturday, June 22nd at 2pm in Fellowship Hall.

Rustin” is a biographical drama film about the life of gay civil rights activist Bayard Rustin. Rustin was instrumental in helping Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others organize the 1963 March on Washington. The film has had positive reviews and received numerous award nominations since its showings. It has also been released on Netflix.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” -Psalm 133:1

Important upcoming dates to be mindful of are **Sunday, March 31st; Sunday, May 5th; and Sunday, May 19th**. Easter Sunday will be on March 31st this year. The committee is working on plans to get ready for the Easter Breakfast and the Easter Egg Hunt. Sunday, May 5th will be a Messy Morning during the regular Sunday School hour. And this year, along with Sunday, May 19th being Pentecost Sunday, we will also be celebrating Youth Sunday. This is definitely a special day as well because several of the youth at Slackwood will be confirmed on that day. Please mark your calendars and be sure to attend these special times in the life of our church.



Also, in case you missed the announcement. The committee would like to invite anyone who'd be interested in spending time with the church's youngest disciples during worship in the upcoming spring and summer months. The commitment would only be one to two Sundays because there are already volunteers who currently share the schedule. Our

children are very open and flexible regarding what happens during the Children's Church. They enjoy any faith related activity/discussion, Bible crafts, Bible stories, and singing. One thing that is particularly important and consistent in every Children's Church is the opportunity for the children to share their concerns and have the volunteer pray with them.

If you are interested in helping with any of the upcoming celebrations or Children's Church, please speak with Mark Thomas or Starr Alleyne.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that we have a fund at the church that is titled the Slackwood Church Trust Fund? It was set up a few years ago to provide an opportunity for people to make a donation to the church that could have a lasting effect. The funds donated are invested, and only the income from the investment may then be used for a need at the church that is identified by the Session. This a good way to make a contribution, or as a result of estate planning, that may assist the church for years to come. If you are interested in making such a donation, contact any member of Session.

THANK YOU

A big THANK YOU to all who shared well-wishes on my move to Bear Creek Assisted Living; Christmas and birthday wishes and party. Thank you for expressions of sympathy on Arlene's passing. I greatly appreciate the thoughts, prayers, cards and gifts.

Marilyn Stebbins

THANKS FROM ARLENE FILSON'S FAMILY

We would like to express our thanks to the Slackwood Church family for the outpouring of love for our mother, Arlene Filson. Special thanks to Pastor Bowman, Shelley Zuckerman, and everyone that helped with the reception after the service.

As a lifelong member of Slackwood Church, Arlene truly loved her church family. She always enjoyed each and every visit from all that went to visit her over the years when she was unable to come to the regular church service. We know she was blessed to have such a wonderful group of people care for her. Thank you all for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers.

Brad and Sharon Filson
Karla and Jeff Eblen and family

*Darkness cannot drive out darkness;
only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate;
only love can do that.*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Please check our calendar online for upcoming meetings and events:
<http://www.slackwoodchurch.org/event-calendar.html>